

THE THRONE ROOM IN HEAVEN (Cont.)

“² Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. ³ And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.” Revelation 4:2-3 (NKJV)

2. THE SIGHTS OF ETERNITY

1. The First and Foremost Sight in Heaven - The Lord!

So, what is the first thing John sees in heaven? Well it is not 'a thing.' It is a person. It is the One on the throne! The throne is very prominent in Revelation. Here the emphasis is the majesty of this One who sits as King of heaven upon that throne.

And who is this? We know that the Lord Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father on His throne. **So, while both are upon the throne (Rev 3:21) here the emphasis seems to be upon the Son.** We get a somewhat sneaky clue in His description for He is seen *like the appearance of jasper and sardius. Both the colors and significance of these stones point to the Lord Jesus.*

Key Scripture: Hebrews 8:3-6 (NKJV) ... *“³ For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer. ⁴ For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; ⁵ who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." ⁶ But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, **inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.**”*

H.A Ironside writes well stating:

The jasper of the Revelation is not the opaque stone we know by that name. It is later described as clear as crystal (21:11). **It is probably the diamond**, the most brilliant of all the precious jewels. The other stone is blood-red and may really be a **ruby**. Thus, the two together give the idea of glory and of sacrifice.

Remembering that many of the first readers of the Revelation were converted Jews, we might ask what these stones would suggest to them. Surely every instructed Hebrew would instantly recall that ... they were the first and last stones in the breastplate of the high priest (Exodus 28:17-21). These stones were engraved with the names of the tribes of Israel, arranged according to the births of the twelve patriarchs; So, the ruby (sardius) would suggest at once the name Reuben, "**Behold a Son,**" and the Jasper Benjamin, "**Son of my right hand.**" **It is Christ enthroned, the Son ... about to reign in power Who is before the seer's vision.**

Scripture tells us that there was also an emerald rainbow encircling the throne. All rainbows are full circles ... but down here we only see half the circle because of the horizon of the earth. In heaven the full circle of the rainbow will surround the throne. This full circle points to the eternal nature of the One who sits on the throne, Who, like a circle, has no beginning and no end.

And this is an interesting colored rainbow... it is emerald green. So, what stone in the High Priest's breastplate did emerald represent? Being the third stone (Ex. 28:17) it points to the third of Jacob's sons - **Levi, the priestly tribe.** Thus, this throne is of a King and a Priest. The two offices are met in One person ... just as the prophetic scriptures pointed to:

- (Zech. 6:12-13) ... 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "**Behold, a man whose name is Branch ... He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices.**"

So, the first thing the believer will see ... is the Lord Himself! And so, it should be ... It is not Heaven without Him!

2. The Second Sight in Heaven - The Church

(Rev. 4:4) ⁴ *Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads."*

The second sight was of 24 thrones surrounding the Kings throne and upon those thrones there were 24 elders. Sitting... clothed in white... with golden crowns upon their heads. These mysterious elders have long been the subject of much debate.

So who are the elders? I believe they represent the redeemed, crowned, rewarded believers. I believe this because: The name 'elders' in scripture is used of Church leaders (**Titus 1:5**), not angelic beings.

- The elders have never been seen or mentioned as being in heaven before (i.e. they were not seen by Isaiah, Ezekiel or Daniel's vision of heaven) but only show after the 'rapture' type event of Revelation 4:1-2.
- The elders are seated on thrones (*which angels never are*) which was a promise in Revelation to the church (**Rev. 3:21**).
- The elders are dressed in white (*speaks of redemption and purity*) which was promised to the church (**Rev. 3:4**).
- The elders have victors ('*stephanos*') crowns like those who have competed in the games and been rewarded. This was a promise to the church (**Rev 2:10**).

So what will you see? When you make it to heaven, especially after the Rapture ... you'll see the entire church! That in itself ... will make for an incredible sight! All the redeemed ... all the "called out ones" (*the ecclesia*) ... all in one place at one time! And they will be pure, clothed in white and rewarded for their work with crowns on their head. And they will be with Jesus, seated around His throne. May both you and your loved ones be there on that day!

3. The Third Sight in heaven - The Angelic Beings

We'll see some odd looking creatures! (Rev. 4:6-7) ... In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. Ezekiel, in his vision of heaven, saw something similar ... but there the living creatures each had four faces of a lion, an ox, a man and an eagle (**Ezekiel 1:6, 10**).

THE FOUR GOSPELS A very influential interpretation (*believed by many church historians and theologians*) symbolically links each creature to a Gospel perspective:

- **Matthew – Lion** (Pictures the King: power, authority, wilderness imagery) - Mathew's gospel is written primarily to the Jews. It starts with Jesus' genealogy to prove Jesus was a descendant of Abraham, a son of David. It contains frequent quotes from the Old Testament to prove the Messiahship of Jesus. It shows Jesus is the King, the Lion of the tribe of Judah.
- **Mark – Ox** (Pictures a servant of man: sacrifice and service, priestly themes) - Mark's gospel was written to Gentiles. It doesn't contain many quotes from the Old Testament but presents Jesus who came to serve (*like the ox*) and give His life for the many (**Mk. 10:45**).

- **Luke – Man** (Pictures His humanity: focus on Jesus' humanity and genealogy) - Luke's gospel presents the humanity of Jesus. He is often called 'the Son of Man' in this gospel and gives many stories that are not found anywhere else.
- **John – Eagle** (Pictures His heavenly origin and divine nature: divine Word, heavenly theology) - *John's gospel presents Jesus as God!* Not just a servant, not just a man, not even just the Messiah ... But God Almighty, the "I AM, Yahweh", from the Old Testament. The Word who is God!

Here, Revelation visually affirms ... the **fourfold witness** of the Gospel.

THE SOUNDS OF ETERNITY

(Rev. 4:8-11) ... ⁸ *The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"* ⁹ *Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever,* ¹⁰ *the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:* ¹¹ *"You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."*

So what about the sounds of heaven? We see here that these living creatures are continually speaking the praises of the triune God. *'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come'* they repeatedly say. **It says day and night they never stop. And yet it doesn't get old!**

There are different angelic beings that are closer to the very being and presence of God. Some, like these living creatures, surround the throne itself. These angelic beings are so close, they never stop worshipping. They continually give glory, honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne! **And it is fair to say ... that the closer you are to God the more you worship! You can't help it. The more you see of Him, the more in awe you are!**

We also read that the twenty-four (24) elders, a representation of believers in Christ ... also worshipping, *casting their crowns* before the One who sits on the throne.

The Casting of Crowns

The believer's crown is a reward for their hardships, toil and service to the true King. And yet, as they cast them before the Lord Jesus, they acknowledge that everything comes from Him and He alone is worthy of praise. They realize that their work, which was rewarded, was actually His gracious work through them. **Thusly, He gets the final honor as He should!**